

Message Text

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USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

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DIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 2603

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR TU

SUBJ: ALLEGED NEW TURKISH "PROVOCATIONS" OVER GREEK ISLANDS

REF ATHENS 2281 (NOTAL, ATHENS 2424

MIL ADDEES ALSO FOR POLAD

1. DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF CALLED ME EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON
TO SAY THERE HAD BEEN NEW TURKISH PROVOCATIONS AGAINST GREECE
OVER GREEK ISLANDS IN THE EASTERN AEGEAN THIS MORNING. HE
SAID THAT APPROXIMATELY TWENTY TURKISH MILITARY AIRCRAFT
TOOK OFF FROM IZMIR AND FLEW A FLIGHT PATTERN IN THE
AEGEAN. TWO OF THESE AIRCRAFT PEELED OFF FROM THE REGULAR
FORMATION AND MADE SIX UNAUTHORIZED OVERFLIGHTS
OVER THE SAME THREE ISLANDS' AIR SPACE AS IN THE PREVIOUS
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CASES OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS--KHIOS, MITILINI AND SAMOS.

AVEROFF SAID THAT GREEK PATROL PLANES WERE IN THE AREA BUT AFTER A RAPID COMMUNICATION "WITH HIGHER AUTHORITIES" THE GREEK PLANES WERE ORDERED TO WITHDRAW AND NOT ENGAGE THE TURKISH AIRCRAFT. HOWEVER, ANTI-AIRCRAFT INSTALLATIONS ON THE ISLANDS WERE ORDERED TO FIRE ON THE TURKISH AIRCRAFT, WHICH THEY DID.

2. AVEROFF SAID THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THIS RENEWED AND MORE SERIOUS PROVOCATION FOLLOWING GREEK PROTESTS TO THE TURKS ABOUT SIMILAR UNAUTHORIZED FLIGHTS OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS. HE SAID THE TURKISH DECISION TO INCLUDE AS MANY AS TWENTY MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN THIS EXERCISE COULD ONLY BE INTERPRETED BY GREECE AS A "SHOW OF FORCE" AND BE THE TURKS' WAY OF RESPONDING TO THE EARLIER GREEK PROTESTS. AVEROFF SAID THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT COULD NOT HELP BUT CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS "SOMETHING MORE" TO THESE TURKISH PROVOCATIONS THAN MEETS THE EYE. IN ANSWER TO MY QUERY ON THIS, AVEROFF SAID IT CANNOT BE EXCLUDED THAT TURKISH AUTHORITIES ARE PREPARING PUBLIC OPINION AT HOME AND ABROAD FOR SOME KIND OF MILITARY ACTION.

3. AVEROFF WANTED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO KNOW THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SENDING A NOTE ONCE AGAIN TO THE GOT THIS AFTERNOON AND THAT THE NOTE WOULD MAKE CLEAR TO TURKEY THAT TODAY WAS THE "LAST TIME" THAT GREEK AIRCRAFT WOULD BE ORDERED TO "WITHDRAW" IN ORDER TO AVOID A CLASH WITH TURKISH AIRCRAFT. AVEROFF SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATION IN THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AT MID-DAY TODAY AND IF TURKISH MILITARY AIRCRAFT INTRUDE AGAIN INTO GREEK ISLAND AIR SPACE, THE GREEKS WOULD "MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS AND TAKE THEM ON." ONCE AGAIN I COUNSELED HIM IN STRONGEST TERMS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND USE DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO CLARIFY AND SETTLE SUCH PROBLEMS WITH TURKEY.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FOURTH TIME AVEROFF HAS BROUGHT SUCH INCIDENTS TO MY ATTENTION IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN BOTH STATE AND DEFENSE ATTACHE CHANNELS (ATHENS 2424 AND PREVIOUS). THE CONTACT TODAY ALSO FOLLOWED ON THE HEELS OF A CONVERSATION
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I HAD EARLIER THIS WEEK WITH PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS DURING WHICH HE EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT TURKISH INTENTIONS TOWARDS GREECE. I RECOGNIZE THAT THE TURKS HAVE DENIED SOME, AND FOR ALL I KNOW PERHAPS ALL, OF THE ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST THEM BY THE GREEKS OF UNAUTHORIZED OVERFLIGHTS AND PICTURE TAKING OF GREEK ISLANDS. HOWEVER, THESE INCIDENTS ARE POTENTIALLY VERY DANGEROUS, AND I RECOMMEND THAT PROMPT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO APPROPRIATE

WAYS AND MEANS OF TAKING THIS UP WITH TURKISH AUTHORITIES.
KUBISCH

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